In the second half of the last century, leadership in Arabic and Islamic studies in Europe had definitely passed from the French Orientalists to their German colleagues; but France has nevertheless continued to produce serious and sympathetic students of Islam and its culture, whose works are eminently worthy of our attention. Baron Carra de Vaux holds an honourable position among them, and we propose to briefly describe and evaluate his works in the present article. He specialized in the study of Islam as a religious system and particularly in the philosophic and scientific development that had taken place in the world of Islam. Accordingly, his works chiefly deal with Islam and its institutions and also with philosophy and science, as they were cultivated by the Muslims in the Middle Ages.

Carra de Vaux belonged to an aristocratic family of France, and was generally known among his contemporaries as Monsieur le Baron Bernard Carra de Vaux. Born on February 5, 1867 at Bar-sur-Aube, he received his early education at Collège Stanislas, and subsequently entered the Polytechnique in 1886. After completing his studies at this institution, he did not care to seek appointment to any post, but devoted himself entirely to social service and scholarly pursuits. When he was made Mayor of Pansey (Haute-Marne), he founded an Agricultural Syndicate and presided over it for several years. He was later appointed as a Professor at the Catholic Institute, where he gave instruction in Oriental languages, especially Arabic. He was one of the founders of Revue de l'Orient Chretien, and also worked for the organization of Congrès Scientifiques Internationaux des Catholiques. He made a journey to Asia Minor, with the chief object of spreading French influence in that country. He also visited the U.S.A., in order to study the educational system prevalent there. He was a regular contributor to several learned journals, viz., Annales de la Philosophie Chretienne, Le Journal Asiatique de Paris, La Revue Biblique and Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalum. He
also wrote a number of articles for the Leiden Encyclopaedia of Islam and the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics (Edinburgh, 1908).

Carra de Vaux began his literary career by producing a number of monographs on some leading philosophers, such as Leibnitz, Galileo and Newton, which were included in a series entitled, *Les Grands Philosophes*. This series also includes a monograph from his pen on Ibn Sinā (Paris, 1900), which not only gives an exposition of the speculation of that philosopher but also traces the entire development of philosophic thought from the beginnings of Islam to the death of that thinker, whose system as a matter of fact marks the culmination of the philosophic movement in the world of Islam. In this way, the first four centuries of Islam are covered in respect of their theological and philosophic evolution. This survey is continued by our author in his monograph on Imām Ghazālī (Paris, 1902), who in the fifth century produced a happy blend of orthodox theology and the best elements of mystic thought. In addition to this monograph on Ghazālī, Carra de Vaux also translated his *Tahiifut al-Falāsifat* (published in *Le Museon*, Louvain, vol. xviii), in which the great Muslim divine had tried to demonstrate the insufficiency and inconclusiveness of philosophic speculation, by pointing out the inconsistencies and mutual contradictions of the various schools and systems of philosophy.

The doctrine of Islam forms the subject-matter of at least two other books, which Carra de Vaux wrote on the theory and practice of Islam.1 In both these works, the subject is treated in a philosophic spirit, with frequent comparisons with other religions and references to the internal evolution within the bosom of Islam itself. In his *Mahometisme*, Carra de Vaux has developed the thesis that Islam received its early formation in a Semitic environment; but it was later submitted to all sorts of foreign influences, such as Greek, Persian and Indian. It tried to remain faithful to its original genius, but these influences ultimately got the upper hand and succeeded in producing numerous heresies and changes in its pristine purity. Its original genius was Semitic in character, but it was later exposed to strong Aryan influences. As a consequence, it absorbed and incorporated various kinds of superstitions, innovations and accretions. Most of these developments took place on the soil of Persia, which fact explains the Aryan character of these alterations.
Perhaps, the best-known work of Baron Carra de Vaux is his *Les Penseurs de l'Islam*, (Paris, 1921-1926). It is a popular work in 5 volumes and is encyclopaedic in its range, since it covers the whole field of Islamic religion, history, literature, philosophy and science. The first volume is devoted to the sovereigns, historians and writers on political philosophy. The second deals with geography and the mathematical and natural sciences, and sets forth in a lucid manner the achievements of the leading Muslim scientists. This volume is invested with special interest, because the Muslim contributions to various sciences seldom receive an adequate treatment in our common history books. The third volume is concerned with the purely religious disciplines, such as *Tafsîr, Ḥadîth* and *Fiqh*, and traces their development through the centuries, till they reached their maturity. The fourth volume deals with *'Ilm al-‘Aqâ'id, 'Ilm al-Kalâm* (scholastic philosophy) and Islamic mysticism. The fifth and last volume describes the origin and tenets of various sects and the religious trends in modern Islam. In compiling this comprehensive work, the aim of the author has been to introduce the non-specialist reader to the various branches of Islamic literature and thought and to the various aspects of Muslim cultural life. He has attained this object in a most successful manner, by narrating the achievements, of Muslim celebrities and by describing the literary activities of a large number of writers and thinkers. Typical passages from their works are reproduced, and in this way the reader is brought in direct contact with their spirit and style.

The works of Baron Carra de Vaux for the most part are, of course, in the French language; but some of his writings may be read in English as well. As a result of the present paper, some of our readers might be inspired with a desire to read Carra de Vaux for themselves. We shall, therefore, make a special reference to such writings of the learned baron as are available in the English garb. In the first place, we should like to refer to the contribution which he made to the well-known work, *The Legacy of Islam*, a symposium, planned and edited by Sir Thomas Arnold and Professor Alfred Guillaume and published by the Oxford University Press in 1931. This work seeks to give an account of those elements in the culture of Europe which are derived from the Islamic world. Carra de Vaux's contribution forms the last chapter of this work, and deals with the sciences of Astronomy and Mathematics, as cultivated by the Muslims during the Middle Ages. Like other parts of the book, this chapter too is a condensed piece of writing and requires careful and
and attentive reading. In it our author makes a just appraisal of the role which the Muslims have played in the advancement of science, and makes a full acknowledgement of the debt which modern Europe owes to them in this respect. The views of Carra de Vaux on this subject may be conveniently given in his own words.

He writes that "the Arabs are the pupils of the Greeks; their science is a continuation of Greek science, which it preserves, cultivates and on a number of important points develops and perfects. The Arabs have really achieved great things in science: they taught the use of ciphers, although they did not invent them, and thus became the founders of the arithmetic of everyday life. They made algebra an exact science, and developed it considerably and laid the foundations of an analytical geometry. They were indisputably the founders of plane and spherical trigonometry, which properly speaking did not exist among the Greeks. In astronomy, they made a number of valuable observations. They have preserved for us in their translations a number of Greek works, the originals of which have been lost, e.g., three books of the Conics of Apollonius, the Spherics of Menelaus, the Mechanics of Hero of Alexandria, the Pneumatics of Philo of Byzantium, a short book on the balance attributed to Euclid and another to Archimedes on the clepsydra."  

Carra de Vaux goes on to say that "another reason for our interest in Arab science is the influence it has exerted in the West. The Arabs kept alive the higher intellectual life in a period, when the Christian West was fighting desperately with Barbarism. The zenith of their activity may be placed in the ninth and tenth centuries, but it was continued down to the fifteenth. From the twelfth century, every one in the West who had any taste for science, some desire for light, turned to the East or to the Moorish West. At this period, the works of the Arabs began to be translated, as those of the Greeks had previously been translated by them. The Arabs thus form a connecting link between ancient culture and modern civilization. When, at the Renaissance, the spirit of man was once again filled with the zeal for knowledge, if it was able to set promptly to work, to produce and to invent, it was because the Arabs had preserved and perfected various branches of knowledge and had kept the spirit of research alive, ready for future discoveries."

Baron Carra de Vaux also contributed a number of articles to The Encyclopaedia of Islam (Leiden, 1908-1938), a great work of reference
unique in its own field, a revised edition of which is now in the course of publication. His article on “Tafsîr” is, however, too brief and inadequate in view of the importance and extent of the Tafsîr-literature. The same remark applies to his article on “Ţibb.” Let us hope that this deficiency will be remedied in the revised edition of this Encyclopaedia.

Carra de Vaux also wrote several articles on Islamic religious institutions and personalities for the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics (13 vols, Edinburgh, 1908-1926), another great work of reference, a monument of international co-operation in the field of learning. In one of these articles, namely the one on “Righteousness” as conceived and practised in Islam, he writes that “Most of the great personages in Muslim history have been men of upright character. The first Caliph, Abû Bakr, received a surname which shows how much his uprightness was appreciated and the great importance that was attached to this quality. He was called al-Şiddiq, the righteous one, the veracious. Celebrities of an opposite character are the exception in Islam. If we turn to the accounts of historians and modern travellers, we find numerous passages in praise of the righteousness of the Orientals, especially of the peasants and nomads”.

It will thus be seen that he speaks of Islam, its ideals and its influence on the West in appreciative terms. Even when he is sometimes critical of some of its institutions, such as female seclusion in the Muslim society, he does not speak the language of a bigoted person or a caustic critic, but expresses himself with a restraint and moderation, which cannot fail to excite our admiration. His writings are characterized by a remarkably simple and clear style, which is of course the hallmark of every good French writer. At the same time, his works reveal a pleasing generosity of spirit and the serenity of a balanced and philosophic mind.

In short, Baron Carra de Vaux was a scholar of great erudition and distinction, who rendered a great service to the cause of general education and enlightenment by producing learned as well as popular works. At the same time, he called the attention of his countrymen to the achievements of the Muslims in the field of science and philosophy and to the honourable place which the Muslim scientists and philosophers occupy in the history of the intellectual development of mankind. This vindication on the part of Carra de Vaux of the Muslim contribution to the intellectual culture of mankind was all the more necessary in view of the unfortunate and unjust remarks of Ernest Renan, who in the last
century had declared that Islam was inimical to science. For these reasons, Baron Carra de Vaux is entitled to our esteem and grateful remembrance. His works deserve to be better known in this country, especially his *Les Penseurs de l'Islam*, which surveys the whole field of Islamic religion, history, literature and culture in a popular and entertaining manner, and is, therefore, particularly suitable for the general reader.

The twentieth century has been graced by the literary careers of two distinguished French scholars and Orientalists, viz., Baron Carra de Vaux (d. 1953) and Professor Louis Massignon (d. 1162). By their sound scholarship and their deep humanity, they brought honour not only to the French school of Orientalists but also to the Catholic Church to which they belonged. So far as we can judge, they represented French culture at its best. If all the Catholic scholars and students of religion were characterized by the same catholicity of spirit, the same wide sympathies and the same deep humanity which distinguished Baron Carra de Vaux and Professor Massignon, this world would surely be a happier place to live in.

We end this article by giving a complete list of the works of Carra de Vaux. It will give our readers a fairly good idea of the range of his interests as well as of the subjects, which he has illumined by his penetrating researches and his lucid exposition.

**WORKS OF BARON CARRA DE VAUX**

1. Une Classification des pluriels brisés en arabe. 1891.
4. L'Astrolobe Linéaire ou Bāton-Tousi. 1895.
5. Ousāma, un Emir Syrien. 1895.
6. Fragments d' eschatologie musulmane. 1895.
7. Etude de Syntaxe Sémitique Comparée: Syntaxe de Psaumse envisagée au point de vue de la Syntaxe Arabe. 1895.
9. La Légende de Bahirā, ou un moine chrétien. 1898.
10. Le Livre de l'avertissement, traduction de Macoudi. 1898.
12. Joseph Salvador et James Darmsteter, conférence faite à la Société des études juives. 1900
14. La Philosophie Illuminative d'après Suhrawardi Maqtoul. 1902.
   Tome II : Les Géographes; Les Sciences Mathématiques et Naturelles.
   Tome III : L'Exégèse; La Tradition et la Jurisprudence.
   Tome IV : La Scolastique, la Théologie et la Mystique. La Musique.

Notes:
2. Id est, the Indian numerals, which came to be known as Arabic numerals in the West.
3. The Legacy of Islam, p. 376.
4. For full information regarding the Arabic works which were translated in the Middle Ages into Latin and other European languages, the reader may consult the following:
   (a) F. Wüstenfeld, Die Übersetzungen Arabischer Werke in das Lateinische seit dem XI. Jahrhundert. Göttingen, 1877.
5. In the end, I must express my cordial thanks to my learned and esteemed friend, Dr. M. Hamidullah (Paris), for his kindness in supplying me with some essential information about the life and works of Carra de Vaux. Without his friendly help, this article could not have been completed in its present form.